

## President Kanerva highlights PA's positions at OSCE Ministerial Council



Addressing the OSCE's 22nd Ministerial Council in Belgrade on 3 December, OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva (MP, Finland) called for far-reaching action by the international community to deal with a world that "sometimes seems to be spiraling out of control." The President thanked the 2015 Serbian Chairmanship of the OSCE for its work under demanding circumstances and looked forward to strong co-operation between the Assembly and the incoming German Chairmanship in the year ahead.

With particular emphasis on the crisis in and around Ukraine, the refugee and migrant crisis, and the threat of terrorism, President Kanerva stressed the need to find compromises, address root causes, and promote reform of the OSCE to more effectively respond to challenges.

Regarding Ukraine, the President highlighted the Parliamentary Assembly's Helsinki Declaration, adopted earlier this year in the Finnish capital, and recalled its emphasis on the need for full access by OSCE monitors to the entirety of Ukraine's eastern border.

In order to better respond to the refugee crisis, the President proposed the creation of a co-ordinating position within the Organization, whose work could be supported by a network of focal points from each OSCE body. On terrorism, the President recalled the Assembly's recommendations for increased efforts to cut off its financial lifelines and to promote policies that address its underlying causes.

He noted, however, that if the OSCE is to take more action in addressing today's security challenges, it must pursue organizational reform, as described in the PA's Helsinki +40 Project's Final Report. "Let me encourage all of us to consider

the array of suggestions the Assembly has offered this year for the kind of reform that is essential, including modification of consensus-bound decision-making to enable swifter action; increasing investment in our field presences; and more openly addressing human rights issues," President Kanerva said.

When it comes to addressing human rights, OSCE PA Third Committee Chair Isabel Santos (MP, Portugal) expressed regret that governments were unable to agree at the Ministerial Council on any decisions or declarations in this dimension. Noting that diplomats meeting in Belgrade considered a range of human rights-related draft decisions – all of which failed to reach consensus – Santos recalled the PA's recommendations for OSCE reform, including modification of consensus-based decision-making.

While in Belgrade, OSCE PA officials participated in a number of events on the sidelines of the Ministerial Council. OSCE PA Vice-President Roberto Battelli (MP, Slovenia) attended the OSCE Troika meeting with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation while Secretary General Spencer Oliver attended the Troika meeting with the Asian Partners for Co-operation, at which representatives from Afghanistan, Australia, Japan, Republic of Korea and Thailand were present. In his presentation, Oliver highlighted the work with partner countries carried out by the Parliamentary Assembly and stressed the importance of strengthening the Helsinki principles at the core of the OSCE.

PA staff members also met in Belgrade with representatives from the Georgian Parliament to discuss practical aspects of preparations for the Assembly's 25th Annual Session, to be held in Tbilisi on 1-5 July 2016.



## SG Oliver attends NATO PA Transatlantic Forum in Washington

OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver attended the 15th Annual Parliamentary Transatlantic Forum, held at the National Defense University (NDU) in Washington this week. Organized by the NATO PA, the Atlantic Council, and NDU's Institute for National Strategic Studies, the event on 7-8 December included sessions on the state of the transatlantic relationship, countering Russian hybrid tactics in Ukraine and Syria, the Iran nuclear deal, the 2016 U.S. presidential election, and the fight against ISIS and international terrorism.

On the margins of the forum, Oliver met with with Asa

Lindestam, former OSCE PA First Committee Chair and current Vice-Chair of the Defence Committee in the Swedish Parliament, as well as NATO PA Vice-President Lord Michael Jopling, one of the founders of the OSCE PA.

Oliver also met with NATO PA SG David Hobbs, with whom he has established a close working relationship in recent years. This co-operation was extended this week by OSCE PA Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares and Conference Co-ordinator Odile Lelarge who visited NATO PA's Brussels headquarters for consultations with their counterparts.